

Message Text

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11

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 AID-05 EB-07 TRSE-00 IGA-01 AGR-05

/092 W

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P R 121400Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3352

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

CINCUSNAVEUR

COMNAVTELCOM

USCINCEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0467

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ET

SUBJECT: ERITREAN WRAP-UP

REF: ASMARA 0465

1. BOTH 2ND DIVISION AND ETH. NAVY CONFIRM THAT LAST NIGHTS (MAY 12) FIRING PRECIPITATED BY INSURGENT ATTACK. DURING ATTACK, INSURGENTS FIRED WHAT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN 120 MM ROCKET FROM THE WEST OR SOUTH-WEST, AT AIRPORT TERMINAL BUILDINGS. ALTHOUGH PROBABLY AIMED AT ETH. AIR FORCE BASE, MISSILE LANDED IN FRONT OF AIRFREIGHT BUILDING. ON SIGHT EVALUATION BY SENIOR MAAG ADVISOR INDICATES CONTROL TOWER WOULD HAVE BEEN HIT IF ROCKET HAD BEEN A FEW DEGREES TO THE RIGHT. EVIDENTLY ONLY ONE ROUND FIRED.

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2. DURING SAME ATTACK, WATER TOWER AT TRACT ALFA RECEIVED FIVE BULLET HOLES, WHICH COULD AFFECT KAGNEW STATION WATER SUPPLY TO TRACT A AND CONGEN COMPOUND. ETH. NAVY SOURCES REPORT CAP-TURING TWO INSURGENTS AND DISCOVERING, OUTSIDE THEIR COMPOUND, BLOOD AND SHELL CASINGS LEFT BY ATTACKERS. ALSO WHAT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN TWO 3.5 IN. ROCKETS, NOT GRENADES, WHICH PROBABLY RESPONSIBLE FOR FIRST EXPLOSIONS HEARD LAST NIGHT, CAUSED MINOR DAMAGE TO EXTERIOR WALL AND OFFICERS CLUB AT ETH. NAVY HDQTRS. TRACT A. ONE SMALL ARMS ROUND HIT AND DISABLED TRANSFORMER AT TRACT A.

3. CONGEN HAS RECEIVED UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT A 2ND DIV. COLONEL COMMITTED SUICIDE DURING WEEK OF MAY 5TH, AS PROTEST AGAINST ERITREAN CAMPAIGN. SAME SOURCE REPORTED THAT GROUP OF ARMY WAR WIDOWS STAGED PROTEST AGAINST CAMPAIGN BEFORE GEN GETACHEW NADEW, MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR OF ERITREA. MANY ERITREANS ARE DISCUSSING ALLEGED DEMAND OF 2ND DIV. TROOPS FOR ETH. \$ 10,000 LUMP SUM DEATH BENEFIT. ERITREANS ASSUME THAT EPMG DOES NOT HAVE RESOURCES TO PAY SUCH BENEFITS, AND THAT THIS IS PRESSURE BY TROOPS ON EPMG TO END ERITREAN CAMPAIGN. ERITREANS ARE EXTREMELY SKEPTICAL THAT ETH. \$ 31 MILLION AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT LOAN BY USG TO EPMG WILL ACTUALLY BE USED FOR AGRICULTURE AND NOT TO PAY EPMG COSTS OF ERITREAN CAMPAIGN.

4. ON 8 MAY ELF ROBBED THE COMMERCIAL BANK OF ETHIOPIA (CBE) AND STOLE 3 TRUCKS OF FLOUR IN DECAMERE, ERITREA, APPROX 30 KLMS SOUTH OF ASMARA. AMBAYE EFTER, NORTHERN REGIONAL MANAGER OF CBE TOLD CON OFF THAT ROBBERS HAD TAKEN ETH. \$ 525,000. FROM THE CBE IN DECAMERE, AMBAYE ADDED THAT THE ADDIS ABABA BANK (AAB) IN AGORDAT WAS ROBBED OF ETH. \$ 125,000, AND THE AAB IN KEREN OF ETH. \$ 225,000 LAST WEEK. IT APPEARS THAT THE ROBBERIES AT THE ADDIS ABABA BANKS WERE INSIDE JOBS. AS A RESULT OF THE ROBBERIES, BRANCHES OF CBE HAVE BEEN CLOSED IN ADI UGRI, DECAMERE, AND ASMARA BUT MAIN OFFICE IN ASMARA REMAINS OPEN. BANCO DI ROMA IS ALSO CLOSING ITS BRANCHES IN ASMARA, AND WILL NOW OPERATE ONLY ITS MAIN OFFICE HERE. AMBAYE WAS VISIBLY UPSET SINCE GEN. GETACHEW NADEW IS BLAMING HIM FOR THE ROBBERIES. AS CON OFF LEFT AMBAYE'S OFFICE AT NOON, 4 MILITARY REPS WERE WAITING TO SEE HIM. BOTH AMBAYE AND Y.C. DESAI, MANAGER OF AAB ATTENDED A 12:30 MEETING AT 2ND DIV. HEADQTRS. CON OFF ASKED AMBAYE ABOUT DEPOSITORS INSURANCE.

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AMBAYE SAID INSURANCE EXISTED, BUT FELT THAT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS MAY ENTER INTO CLAIM PROCESS.

SHERRY

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